

### Abstracts United States

In the first part, Jeremy Young will talk about the war on public education that is raging in America - a war PEN America calls the "Ed Scare" for its similarity to destructive Red Scares of the past. Building on PEN America's extensive research, this chapter will explore the landscape of "educational gag orders," "educational intimidation" laws, book bans, and restrictions on higher education autonomy in states and districts across the United States. In addition to an overview of what has been going on since 2021, he will discuss what politicians and conservative intellectuals think they can achieve with such policies. He will also address the chilling effect such policies have had throughout the country, where professors and teachers have had their classrooms censored by fearful administrators, and where teachers are engaging in rampant self-censorship, jeopardizing the freedom to learn for millions of American students.

In the second part, Nelva Williamson will reflect upon her forty-two years of teaching history in Houston, Texas. From the beginning of her career, she has always taught the truth based on the scholarship of the time and her own learning. In the summer of 2020, when the Texas State Legislature started talks for creating laws to censor what was taught in public schools under the guise of CRT, she could not believe her ears: she was not only told to teach "both" sides of topics that were seen as controversial such as enslavement and the Holocaust but also not to teach the history of her ancestors. Since then, she has taken a firm and intentional stand to teach the truth no matter the laws or changes to the state curriculum. She started tweeting her displeasure with the hashtag; #Teach Truth, started attending online seminars on current scholarship in African American history, signed the Teach Truth petition and was invited to speak on national platforms about teaching truth in history and standing against book bans. Her efforts let her to be doxed by a right-wing website. She is teaching her students to be thoughtful critical thinkers and learners, and that we must honor our past to move forward with purpose and understanding for our future. Her pledge is to always teach the truth, and as educators to be the voice of reason in a world that is not always reasonable.

Finally, Mathias Moschel will analyze some of the critiques of Critical Race Theory (CRT) since its birth in the United States in the late 1980s – early 1990s. Some of these critiques were that it is radical; that it attacks liberal and Enlightenment values (including science); and that it promotes identity politics. Some of these arguments have come up again in contemporary iterations, with the difference that in the US they have gone beyond narrower academic circles and are now also featuring at the policy and legislative level. Mathias will look at whether and how some of these critiques have crossed the Atlantic Ocean to mainland Europe where they have taken on particular local/contextual dimensions with additional critiques, including but not limited to the argument that American problems and their identity politics are being imported to Europe.

Whereas in Europe the CRT critiques have not (yet) taken on the policy and legislative dimensions of the United States, he will look into some of the initiatives that have been taken, especially in France.